

Slide content for Mark 2:1-12 “Our Deepest Need” (5/22/22)

Outline:

1) Through the roof

James Edwards, “The single most common attribute of crowd in Mark is that they obstruct access to Jesus. Thus, despite Jesus’ popularity, crowds are not a measure of success.” (*The Gospel According to Mark*, Pillar Series, 74)

2) “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Tim Keller, “Jesus is saying to him, ‘I understand your problems. I have seen your suffering. I’m going to get to that. But please realize that the main problem in a person’s life is never his suffering; it’s his sin.’ ...

Jesus is confronting the paralytic with his main problem by driving him deep. Jesus is saying, ‘By coming to me and asking for only your body to be healed, you are not going deep enough. You have underestimated the depths of your longings, the longings of your heart.’

Everyone who is paralyzed naturally wants with every fiber of his being to walk. ... In his heart he’s almost surely saying, ‘If only I could walk again, then I would be set for life. If only I could walk, then everything would be right.’

And Jesus is saying, ‘My son, you’re mistaken.’ That may sound harsh, but it’s profoundly true. Jesus says, ‘When I heal your body, if that’s all I do, you’ll feel you’ll never be unhappy again. But wait two months, four months—the euphoria won’t last. The roots of the discontent of the human heart go deep.’

Keller again, “You were looking to that thing to save you from oblivion, from disillusionment, from mediocrity. You’ve made that wish into your savior. You never use that term, of course—but that’s what’s happening. And if you never quite get it, you’re angry, unhappy, empty. But if you *do* get it, you ultimately feel *more* empty, *more* unhappy. You’ve distorted your deepest wish by trying to make it into your savior, and now that you finally have it, it’s turned on you.”

“...we thought if we just got a little bit of help we could save ourselves. But we learned that Jesus wanted to take us deeper. ...to go all the way to our heart and reconfigure the main thing that our heart wanted. You see, it wasn’t our deepest wish itself that was the problem, just as it wasn’t wrong for the paralytic to want to walk. ... The fact that we thought getting our deepest wish would heal us, would save us—*that was the problem*. We had to let Jesus be our Savior.” (Keller, *King’s Cross*, 30, 32)

3) “Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

4) “Which is easier?”

**Dan. 7:9** “As I looked, thrones were placed,  
and the Ancient of Days took his seat;  
his clothing was white as snow,  
and the hair of his head like pure wool;  
his throne was fiery flames;  
its wheels were burning fire.  
10 A stream of fire issued  
and came out from before him;  
a thousand thousands served him,  
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;  
the court sat in judgment,  
and the books were opened. ...  
13 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a son of man,  
and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.  
14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him;  
his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,  
and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed

5) Authority and response

James Edwards, “The first mention of faith (2:5) in Mark significantly links it with **acting** rather than with knowing or feeling. Faith is... **active trust that Jesus is sufficient for one’s deepest and most heartfelt needs.**” (*The Gospel According to Mark*, Pillar Series, 76)

Hugh Martin, “Jesus loved the enthusiast, the man who knew what side he was on and threw himself whole-heartedly into the struggle. He liked energetic action, as in the men who climbed the roof and broke a way through for their paralyzed friend, or in Zacchaeus who forgot his dignity and swarmed up a tree. He loved the generous giver. All four Gospels quote His saying, ‘He who loves life loses it; he who spends keeps.’ It sums up His attitude to life. He praised the man who banged on the door till he got an answer; He wanted men to show that kind of determination in the affairs of religion. He praised the widow who badgered the unjust judge into doing justice. He did not like playing for safety or burying one’s talent. It is the peace-makers

rather than the peace-keepers whom He blesses. Goodness is a positive active loyalty.” [[The Seven Letters: Christ's Message to His Church](#) (London: Carey Kingsgate, 1956), 107]

**Mark 14:61** ...Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”<sup>62</sup> And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”<sup>63</sup> And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need?<sup>64</sup> You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death

Tim Keller once more, “Jesus knows what the religious leaders are thinking, so he knows that if he begins to let on that he's not just a miracle worker but also the Savior of the world, they're eventually going to kill him. If he not only heals this man but forgives his sins as well, he's taking a decisive, irreversible step down the path to his death. By taking that step, he is putting a down payment on our forgiveness.

You see, at that moment Jesus had the power to heal the man's body, just as he has the power to give you that career success, that relationship, that recognition you've been longing for. He actually has the power and authority to give each of us what we've been asking for, on the spot, no questions asked.

But Jesus knows that's not nearly deep enough. He knows that whether we're a paralyzed man lying on a mat or [fill in your own situation], we don't need someone who can just grant our wishes. We need someone who can go deeper than that. Someone who will ... lovingly and carefully... pierce our self-centeredness and remove the sin that enslaves us and distorts even our beautiful longings. In short, we need to be forgiven. That's the only way for our discontent to be healed. It will take more than a miracle worker or a divine genie—it will take a Savior. Jesus knows that to be our Savior he is going to have to die.

And we will discover that in the process of dealing with what we thought were our deepest wishes, Jesus has revealed an even deeper truer one beneath—and it is for Jesus himself. He will not just have granted that true deepest wish, *he will have fulfilled it*. Jesus is not going to play the rotten practical joke of giving you your deepest wish—until he has shown you that it was for him all along.” (Keller, *King's Cross*, 35-36)